



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **50 CFR Part 679**

**[Docket No. 210210-0018; RTID 0648-XA913]**

### **Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish Fishery by Non-Rockfish Program Catcher Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for groundfish, other than pollock, by non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2021 Chinook salmon prohibited species catch limit established for non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels using trawl gear and directed fishing for groundfish, other than pollock, in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 26, 2021, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2021.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Obren Davis, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The 2021 Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels directed fishing for groundfish, other than pollock, using trawl gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA is 3,060 Chinook salmon (§ 679.21(h)(4)(i)(C)).

In accordance with § 679.21(h)(8)(ii), the Regional Administrator has determined that the 2021 Chinook salmon PSC limit established for non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels directed fishing for groundfish, other than pollock, using trawl gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for groundfish (except for pollock) by non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at 50 CFR 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

#### **Classification**

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest, as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay is prohibiting directed fishing for groundfish, other than pollock, by non-Rockfish Program catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of March 25, 2021.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 25, 2021.

---

Jennifer M. Wallace,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2021-06560 Filed: 3/26/2021 4:15 pm; Publication Date: 3/31/2021]